

December 4, 2017

Ms. Marlene Dortch  
Secretary  
Federal Communications Commission  
445 12<sup>th</sup> Street, S.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20554

**Re: *Connect America Fund*, WC Docket No. 10-90**

Dear Ms. Dortch:

We are seven rural telecommunications carriers that elected the revised offer of Alternative Connect America Model (A-CAM) support in the State of Oregon. We urge the Federal Communications Commission to adopt an order before the end of this year to authorize additional A-CAM funding up to \$200/month per eligible customer location to enable more rural consumers in the State of Oregon to have the broadband connectivity necessary for jobs, education, healthcare, and economic development.

The Oregon Office of Economic Analysis reported this week that every county in the State of Oregon saw population growth in 2017, and it projects increased population for the state in the coming decade. At the same time, rural areas in Oregon have higher unemployment rates, and the rural economy is less diverse than in metro areas. A significant portion of the rural economy in Oregon is dependent on agriculture (both farming and ranching) and tourism. Access to broadband is critical to economic growth and productivity in rural Oregon. The need is greater than ever to ensure that Oregonians have access to broadband in all corners of the state.

Allocating additional funding to further extend broadband in our communities will bring other important benefits. The net increase in population in rural Oregon is largely due to people moving from elsewhere. In some cases, people are choosing a rural locale for retirement; in other cases, younger workers are moving to more rural areas to raise their families. Further extending the reach of broadband is critical so that children in our rural communities can do their homework at home, and our aging population can access government services and medical care via broadband.

Providing additional A-CAM funding now will result in defined and measurable progress in broadband deployment in rural Oregon. The companies in Oregon that elected the revised offer of A-CAM support committed to deploy broadband to a specific number of additional locations if further funding were made available by December 31, 2017. Collectively, additional funding of \$200/month per location would result in 720 additional locations in Oregon having access to a minimum of 25/3 Mbps broadband service, and 674 new locations having access to service of at least 10/1 Mbps. The number of A-CAM funded locations that would remain on “reasonable request” in Oregon would decrease by 41 percent (876 locations) if funding is increased to this level.

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We stand ready to meet the additional broadband deployment obligations that we committed to earlier this year. We are developing our plans to upgrade network infrastructure in our communities and are anxious to know whether additional funding will be provided so that we can complete our network planning. If the Commission authorizes additional funding now, we will be able to implement an efficient and logical extension of our networks to serve more remote customers.

The Commission established the A-CAM program to bring broadband to rural America. It is time to build on that solid foundation to take further steps to close the digital divide. We urge the Commission to act by the end of this year to allocate additional funding to carry out its original decision to provide A-CAM funding for up to \$200/month per eligible location.

Sincerely,

Asotin Telephone Company  
Cascade Utilities, Inc.  
Helix Telephone Company  
Monroe Telephone Company  
Pioneer Telephone Cooperative  
Roome Telecommunications Inc.  
Trans-Cascade Telephone Company

A-CAM Companies in Oregon

cc: Chairman Ajit Pai  
Commissioner Mignon Clyburn  
Commissioner Michael O’Rielly  
Commissioner Jessica Rosenworcel  
Commissioner Brendan Carr